

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-23 are pending in the present application, Claims 1-23 having been amended. Support for the amendments to Claims 1-23 is found in the originally filed specification, and no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention; Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter; and Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Benson et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 20003/0200212, hereinafter Benson) in view of Ng (U.S. Patent No. 4,627,019).

With respect to the rejection of Claim 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection. The outstanding Office Action takes the position that Claims 1-23 are “indefinite as to how and when the management of the first processing steps are actually implemented.”¹ However, because the claim language is broad enough to cover the processing steps being implemented at an unspecified time does not make the claim language indefinite. MPEP §2173.04 states “Breadth of a claim is not to be equated with indefiniteness. *In re Miller*, 441 F.2d 689, 169 USPQ 597 (CCPA 1971). Moreover, the other questions raised on pages 3-7 of the outstanding Office Action also pertain to breadth.

Furthermore, the claims are amended to more clearly describe and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded by applicants as the invention. For example, Claim 1 is amended to further clarify that a “session management unit” manages the “session processing steps.”

¹ Office Action, page 3.

Furthermore, the outstanding Office Action takes the position that the relationship between a first management unit and a second management unit is unclear. To more clearly describe and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention, first management unit and second management unit are changed to “session management unit” and “transaction management unit,” respectively. Further, the session management unit is configured to manage a series of session process steps, and the transaction management unit is configured to manage a series of transaction process steps. Applicants respectfully submit that the relationship between the session process and the transaction process is clearly explained with reference to Figs. 4, 7-14, and their corresponding description in the specification.

Moreover, Applicants note that MPEP §2172.01 states that it is not essential to a patentable combination that there be interdependency between the elements of the claimed device or that all the elements operate concurrently toward the desired result. Further, the outstanding Office Action has not established that the specification discloses any allegedly missing elements as being essential.

Accordingly, this ground for rejection is believed to have been overcome. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

With respect to the rejection of Claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. §101, as directed to non-statutory subject matter, this ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Initially, it is noted that Claims 1-15 are apparatus claims, and are statutory (*see* MPEP §2106(B)(2)(a)).

With respect to Claims 16-23, Applicants respectfully submit that amendment to Claims 16-23 clarifies the concrete and tangible results achieved by the claimed invention. For example, amended Claim 16 recites “An information-processing method for an information-processing apparatus which provides one or more clients with a function that

needs exclusive access control in which user information stored in the information-processing apparatus is exclusively read or updated by a client through authentication....” It is respectfully submit that that the claimed information-processing apparatus attains efficient management and fast provision of the function that needs exclusive access control to read or update user information stored therein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 16-23 are directed toward statutory subject matter.

Claim 1 is directed toward an information-processing apparatus including a module which provides one or more clients with a function that needs exclusive access control in which user information stored in the information-processing apparatus is exclusively read or updated by a client through authentication, including: a session management unit configured to manage a series of session processing steps and incidental information in a state where a session with a client is maintained; and a transaction management unit configured to manage a series of indivisible transaction processing steps performed by using the function that needs exclusive access control, wherein the session management unit is configured to start the management of the first processing steps when a management start request is received from the client or when a request other than the management start request is received.

According to the claimed invention, it is possible to attain efficient management and speedy provision of the function that needs exclusive access control to read or update user information stored in the information-processing apparatus.

Turning now to the rejections based on art, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to Claim 1 overcome the rejection based on Benson and Ng. Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “a function that needs exclusive access control in which user information stored in the information-processing apparatus is exclusively read or updated by a client through authentication, comprising: a session management unit configured to manage a series

of session processing steps and incidental information in a state where a session with a client is maintained; and a transaction management unit configured to manage a series of indivisible transaction processing steps performed by using the function that needs exclusive access control.” Applicants respectfully submit that Benson and Ng, taken alone or in proper combination, do not disclose or suggest these features of amended Claim 1.

Benson discloses in lines 4-5 of paragraph [0021] that an explicit transaction starts with an explicit Begin transaction() call and ends with an explicit End transaction() call. Ng discloses in col. 1, lines 20-28 that in one known locking mechanism, two types of locks are distinguished – read locks and write locks. However, Benson and Ng do not disclose or suggest the claimed “session management unit” and “transaction management unit.”

Further, neither of the cited references disclose or suggest “a transaction management unit configured to manage a series of indivisible transaction processing steps performed by using the function that needs exclusive access control,” in which the “function” is described in the claim as one “that needs exclusive access control in which user information is stored in the information-processing apparatus is exclusively read or updated by a client through authentication.”

In view of the above-noted distinctions, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Benson and Ng, taken alone or in proper combination. Furthermore, independent Claims 2-8 and 16-23 are amended to recite elements similar to those recited in amended Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2-8 and 16-23 (and any claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Benson and Ng, taken alone or in proper combination, for at least the reasons stated for Claim 1.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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